

Video Game Review: ‘The Godfather II’ Gives Fans Bang For Their Buck

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 7, 2009 - 5:17pm

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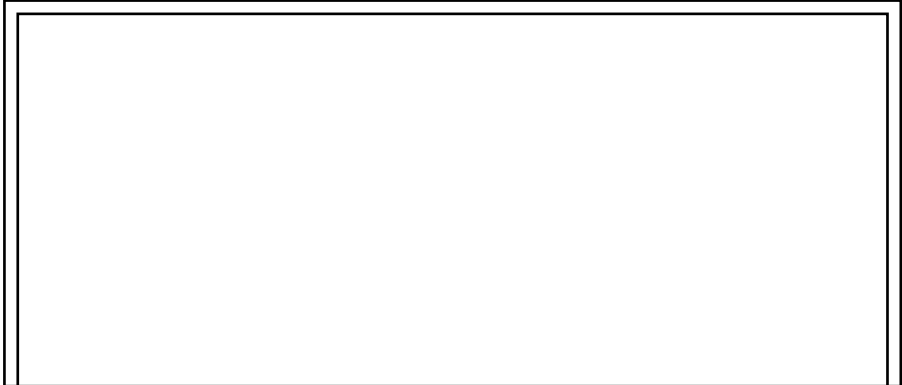
CHICAGO – Some games are easy to pick up and put down when you’ve got a small window of time. “The Godfather II” is not one of those games. Like being willing to watch Francis Ford Coppola’s “The Godfather Trilogy” in one sitting, the game loosely based on the second film will take not just minutes or hours but days of your life.

It can all be a bit much for one game or one player to handle and naturally features a bit of repetition, but it’s hard to say that people who pick up “The Godfather II,” one of the most anticipated games of the season, won’t be satisfied with the “quantity” of game that EA has delivered. The quality is a bit more hit-and-miss.



The Godfather II
Photo credit: EA

After you’ve tried to make a character that looks the most like you, the story of “The Godfather II” picks up in Cuba in 1958 - not exactly a “stable” time in that country. You’re attending Hyman Roth’s birthday party when the revolution begins and you have to blast your way back to NYC.





The Godfather II
Photo credit: EA

The real game kicks in as you try to take down the crime ring established by Carmine Rosato. "The Don's View," accessed by pressing start, is the beating heart of the game. Here's where you manage your empire with a giant map indicating the different operations, fronts, and crime stronghold in the Big Apple.

For example, you start the game with an assault on one of Rosato's prostitution covers, The Sweet Life Bakery. After you take it by force, you have to make sure it's guarded and that Carmine isn't trying to take it back. You use "The Don's View" to keep an eye on your empire.

"The Godfather II" emphasizes power. Take control of an entire "trade" like prostitution or drugs and earn extra cashflow and advantages in the game. You'll be consistently adding members to your crew, but choose wisely because they each have different skill sets. If you start with a safecracker and a medic, you may wish you had someone with more firepower like a demolitions expert.

The individuality of each player's experience with "The Godfather II" is incredibly deep. Characters from the movie, including Don Corleone himself, will guide you as to how to expand your control over your crime ring, but there are countless decisions left up to the player.

The game even recreates major characters and key events from the film including the meeting of the Don's in Cuba, the blackmailing of Senator Geary, and the Senate investigation of organized crime.



The Godfather II
Photo credit: EA

"The Godfather II" is a blend of an open-world crime game like "Grand Theft Auto" and a sim game in that you don't even have to be responsible for every action. Want to damage your enemy's crime ring but don't have time on an assault on his heavily-guarded warehouse? Send one of your guys to bomb it and take it out of commission for a while. You can be aggressive and run in guns blazing or allow your carefully-crafted team to do the work for you.

The deep customization and individuality of each player’s experience is the main draw of a title like “The Godfather II” but it still doesn’t prevent the game from getting repetitive. It may be cool at first to manage your cashflow by limiting guards at certain locations but I quickly wanted to hire someone to deal with my finances and my fronts.

And the basic gameplay of “The Godfather II” can get a little old quickly. The actual gunplay is a little uninspired and sometimes hard to control. And I grew tired of defending locations under attack by rival gangs. What was I paying those damn guards for anyway?



The Godfather II
Photo credit: EA

A few of the story elements are downright bizarre. To take out your enemies, you’ll need to whack away at their family tree. But to do that you need to know the “right way” to kill your rivals. Guns won’t always do the trick. Sometimes you need to use a bat, strangle them, etc. To find out how to kill your enemy, you have to do a favor for someone, usually just someone you find on the street.

For example, the first contract killing involves meeting a guy in an alley who asks you to beat up someone near a pay phone and then, miraculously, you not only know where your enemy is but that he needs to be strangled. It’s an element of the gameplay that seems kind of interesting at first until you think about it for any length of time and you realize it’s just weird.

That sensation of “ooh, that’s cool” followed by the frustrating other side of the coin happens often in “The Godfather II”. The backgrounds look amazing at first but then you’ll notice that the city is awfully small. The pressure system, where you have to make sure you just beat up the people you’re trying to get under your thumb instead of killing them, is neat at first but grows tiresome. Even the “Don’s View” feels intuitive and cool at first, but gets overdone with the micro-managing.

Ultimately, there is enough depth and individual player experience in the very ambitious “The Godfather II” to recommend it for fans of crime games, but anyone on the fence about the title may want to spend a few hours with a rented version to make sure that this is the right mob for them to join.

Don’t miss this awesome video from “The Godfather II”. Warning: Adult Language.

‘The Godfather II’ was released by Electronic Arts and developed by EA Redwood Shores. It is rated M (Mature). The version reviewed was for the PS3, but the title is also available for the Xbox 360 and PC. It was released on April 7th, 2009.



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